

REMARKS

This response is being submitted in response to the Office Action of January 6, 2004, and reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is requested.

In the Action, the Examiner rejected claims 34, 37, 42, 46, 48 and 49 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,895,371 ("Levitas"). Claims 35, 36 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Levitas, claims 39 and 43-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Levitas in view of EP 98592, and claim 47 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Levitas in view of U.S. Patent 5,776,324 ("Usala"). Claims 47 and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

The Examiner objected to claims 38 and 41 because of informalities, and to claims 47 and 48 for new matter. Claims 40 and 41 were objected to as dependant upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By the above amendments, and without narrowing them, claims 40 and 41 have been rewritten in independent form as suggested by the Examiner. To expedite the formal allowance of claims 40 and 41, Applicant has, without prejudice, canceled claims 34-39 and 42-49. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the canceled claims in a continuation application.

Applicant has added new claims 50-59, which are dependant on independent claim 40 and are allowable for at least the same reasons. Applicant has also added new claims 60-68, which are dependant on independent claim 41 and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

It is believed that no additional fees are generated by this response, but the Office is hereby authorized to charge such fees, if any, to Deposit Acct. 04-1420.

This application now stands in allowable form, and reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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